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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard           "Saying it like it is!"
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""



The weather has been better this past week - only one day with temps
in the 90's.  The rest of the week was in the 70's or 80's, with the
humidity relatively better.  While I do enjoy the summer, those
90-degree days and/or high humidity really do a job on me.  Maybe
it's because I'm older and can't tolerate it like I once did, but
I'm glad those kids of days are pretty much over for this year!
Only one more week before Autumn arrives (and I turn another year
older!).

Otherwise, it's been another quiet week.  The drama continues on
the presidential campaign - big surprise there!  The first debate
is coming up soon; those should be really enlightening!

Until next time...



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->In This Week's Gaming Section  - The Final 'Final Fantasy XV' Demo?
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""    Digital Forensics Rescues Retro Video Games!

                                  9 Surprising In-Game Deaths For National Vide
o Games Day!
                                  And more!



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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   -  The Latest Gaming News!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""



     Surely I Just Played My Final 'Final Fantasy XV' Demo


While Final Fantasy XV's decade-long development doesn't beat Duke
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Nukem's excessive run, it's still a hell of a long time for
another part of one of gaming's biggest, longest-running
franchises. And it's still not here. However, at the Tokyo Game
Show, I got what is possibly the last taster before the main
course: a lengthy 30-minute play-through that, barring some brutal
initial loading times, felt like a finished game.

The demo started in a pretty fascinating way: you're thrown into a
throne room on fire, and some evil (and huge) human figure is
goading you to fight. You're also no longer the boy-band prince
that's been part of FFXV's promotional materials since 2006, but
an older, grizzled version. Even your fellow bros are looking a
bit rougher around the edges. You then assemble to duck another
magical flame attack, and the demo frustratingly moves on to a
glossy intro movie showing the King (the protagonist's dad) biding
you farewell as you cross the country to marry... someone. That
early fiery scene seems like a tantalizing teaser of what's to
come. I'm all about time skips.

After setting off on your bro roadtrip, your car breaks down.
While it's getting fixed, you're free to do some chores, hunt some
monsters and get used to the battle system. Like the surprisingly
dense Episode Duscae demo that came out two years ago (!), you're
pretty much given free reign to do what you want. Explore, fight,
camp out, eat at the cafeteria and all the other important things.

My party gained levels, picked up new skills and I even forced
them to wear casual clothes during my play: nothing seemed
particularly locked down, and I could access monster hunt
side-quests even if they were beyond my current level. Like I said
at the start, it felt like the start of a whole, entire game, and
it wouldn't be a huge shock if it was.

Game Director Tabata himself said the game would have been ready
for its previous September launch date, but the team wanted to
avoid the curse of the Day 1 Patch, iron out bugs and add further
polish.

I'm still not sure what to make of Final Fantasy XV: it's
willfully different, and I get why. Now I need to work out whether
Square Enix can deliver on a modern, open-world Final Fantasy
game - and get me to care about Noctis and his buddies. The only
way I'll know is when the whole thing lands. Which is currently
November 29th. For now.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online   -   Online Users Growl & Purr!
   """"""""""""""""""""""

    Digital Forensics Rescues Retro Video Games and Software

Starting in the mid-1980's, a young man named Stephen Cabrinety

filled his home with video games and software. Unopened boxes were piled to the ceilings - -everything from early word processing programs such as WordStar to vintage releases of Pong, Doom and SimCity. Although at the time some might have thought he suffered a peculiar obsession, today the Cabrinety collection is considered a priceless snapshot of our culture--one captured just as the digital tsunami that would forever change our civilization was hitting our shores.

Cabrinety did not live to see what would become of his efforts - he died of Hodgkin's lymphoma in 1995 at the age of 29 - but his collection has achieved a sort of digital immortality. The Stanford University Libraries, which acquired the collection in 2009, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) have just completed a multi-year effort to rescue the collection's digital content from the Atari game cartridges, 5-1/4 inch floppy discs, magnetic tape and other deteriorating storage media that held it. That salvaged data is now safely archived on servers at the Stanford Digital Repository and has been added to NIST's National Software Reference Library, a resource that supports digital forensic investigations.

The Cabrinety collection includes some 25,000 software and video game titles, as well as the original box covers and other period artwork they shipped with. The collection also includes game consoles, magnetic tape readers, bulky hard drives, and other relics of the era.

This collection has obvious appeal for retro gamers, but its value is much more than nostalgic.

"Most of human culture today is created and consumed using digital software," said Henry Lowood, who, as curator of the History of Science and Technology Collection at the Stanford University Library, led the library's effort. "How we write has changed. How we communicate has changed. Art, education, entertainment have all been changed by the advent of computing and software. We wouldn't be able to say much about the evolution of human culture in the late 20th century without collections like these."

Every time a book is published, a copy is deposited at the Library of Congress. Other institutions are dedicated to archiving music and film. But there is no single repository where software goes to be preserved for the ages.

There is one that comes close, however: NIST's National Software Reference Library (NSRL), a vast and constantly updated archive of software titles in their numerous versions. The NSRL is the largest collection of its kind in the world that is publicly known.

NIST maintains this collection not to preserve cultural history but to provide a forensic tool for law enforcement and national security investigators. NIST runs every file in the NSRL through a hashing algorithm that generates a virtually unique digital fingerprint for each - over 180 million of them so far - and makes them publicly available. When investigators seize a computer as evidence, they use those digital fingerprints as a known file filter, so they can quickly separate irrelevant files from those

that might contain evidence.

For instance, after Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 disappeared somewhere over the Pacific in March 2014, the FBI called NIST. "They wanted every hash of every file associated with every flight simulator we had," said Doug White, the NIST computer scientist who runs the NSRL. "All the maps. All the routes. They wanted every flight path the pilot might have practiced on, so they could figure out where he might have gone."

It takes a particular personality to spend one's life feeding the NSRL. You would need the passion of a collector, the sensibility of a curator, the technical skill of a computer scientist, and the ability to find satisfaction in a job that you know will never be done.

In other words, you'd have to be a bit like Stephen Cabrinety. And in fact, White does share a number of traits with the man whose collection he's helped to preserve.

"We're just one year apart in age. We both grew up in East Coast suburbs. And I'm also a bit of a collector," White said, gesturing sheepishly at the towering piles in his office.

So when NIST and Stanford University teamed up on the project, it was a dream assignment for White. He remembers the day in 2012 when the first box from Stanford arrived at the NIST campus in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Inside were early versions of Doom and SimCity, still in their shrink-wrapped boxes.

"For me, it was like opening King Tut's tomb," White said.

Those titles were printed on 5-1/4 inch floppy discs, and extracting the data was relatively straightforward. Other titles presented greater challenges, such as those that were published on audio cassette tape. To load up those programs, you play the sound into a computer.

"It sounds like a modem squeal, with all the hiss and static," White said. Different manufacturers formatted the sound differently, and White had to find documentation for each. "Sinclair computers stored it one way. Commodore stored it another."

So, can you log in to the Stanford University Library server and play the earliest version of Activision'sPitfall! in your browser?

Not yet, said Lowood. "Our first priority was to make sure that the data survived." Now that it has, the Stanford team hopes to begin working on systems that will load the games and applications. In the meantime, the collection is available for viewing at the Stanford University Library.

The partnership between Stanford and NIST was a boon to both. Stanford benefited because, even though the NSRL is principally used for forensic investigations, it turned out to be perfectly suited for this type of cultural preservation. And NIST benefited by adding a large volume of software to the NSRL, some of which still turns up when old hardware is included among evidence

seized in an investigation.

But for all the work by experts at NIST and Stanford, the most
important partner in this project was the one who came first.
Cabrinety was more than a collector. His dream was to create an
educational and research archive for future generations to
study. In 1989, when he was all of 23 years old, he founded
CHIPS - the Computer History Institute for the Preservation of
Software, arguably the first nonprofit institution of its kind.
Cabrinety died too young, but with his collection now saved for
posterity, his dream lives on.

9 Surprising In-Game Deaths For
National Video Games Day (Of Mourning)

I have faced death many times. I have seen the other side and it
is a restart mission screen. Within the realm of video games, my
death is not only inevitable but frequent. Often these deaths are
nothing spectacular, a simple blink to the selection screen.
Thankfully many developers will create a death sequence less
ordinary and that is to be celebrated. On National Video Games
Day we re going to take a look at just a few of the thousands of
inventive and memorable video game deaths.

While the litany of death that awaits young Roger Wilco in the
Space Quest series is enough to fill these virtual pages many
times over, I have raised dust marching through that territory
before. That does not excuse Sierra Entertainment, its early
protagonists in those legendary games of our youth meeting with
only the most cultured and finely curated deaths.

These deaths were very specific and caused by the player s lack
of action or direct action. King s Quest V was the culmination
of years of finding stupid ways to die. Didn t put on a coat?
Freeze to death. Walked into a snake? Get bit and die. Run over
by a horse, mauled by a bear, attacked by critters   there was
no shortage of nature waiting to kill.

The highlight for me though, was when there was clearly some error
in development. Like walking off the side of the stairs. A short
 wilhelm scream later and Graham crumpled like tissue paper in a
daycare. It was abrupt, strange and anger inducing.

Quick-time events (QTEs) are my ruin. A QTE is a planned out event
in which you have to press the buttons at the exact time, speed
and order in which they are presented on screen. In Mercenaries a
QTE was needed to hijack a helicopter or tank, in Call of Duty
QTEs are used often for really awesome pieces of action that
aren t really open for interpretation or free will. I m terrible
at QTEs, I want to press the buttons when I want to press the
buttons, not when the game tells me to. However, the single worst
use of QTEs has to be Spider-Man 3: Web of Shadows.

There are a lot of QTEs in this game, more than should be allowed
in an entire series of games. Each QTE was primed for failure.
What made these events exponentially worse is that Spider-Man
should never be falling flat on his face. He s Spider-Man! He has

Spidey-sense! Why is Spider-Man relegated to QTEs? You damn well know my reaction time isn t nearly as quick as Spider-Man s! If you didn t rage quit while playing this game, then you must be really good at Simon.

Atari games, while at the forefront of gaming and the precursor for many of the great games we have today, were low graphic pixelated affairs. Dying in an Atari game was usually nothing special. The character blinked, jumped into the air and fell off-screen or it simply cut to the restart screen. Except when turning into a melty puddle of pixel goo.

With only 128 bytes of RAM in the original Atari 2600, there was no room to program multiple death effects based on the action. Many games accentuated this fact, but none more than the obscure titles Miner 2049er and BC s Quest for Tires. Miner 2049er, a Donkey Kong clone turned your player character (PC) into mush if you missed a jump. The same was true for BC s Quest whether you hit a branch or a rival caveman. Clearly, the sheer velocity of a caveman on a wheel has not been properly represented throughout history.

Pre-dating the brutality in Mortal Kombat by four years, Ninja Gaiden wasn t particularly bloody until you died. At this point, the adrenaline started pumping as you frantically searched your pockets for another quarter because on screen was an absolute horror for a child of the arcade. Ryu unceremoniously tied down with rope and chain, a circular saw approaching his midsection his pixelated eyes wrought with terror. The ninja had lost his cool and needed your quarter to live again.

If you weren t quick enough (10 seconds is a long time in the arcade and you should have had your quarters out already) then the screen would splatter red with ninja blood. Years later we d see brutality kills in fighting games, much bloodier endings, but in 1988 this was pretty heavy for an arcade title. Ninja Gaiden helped desensitize an entire generation of kids to video game violence.

In South Park Stick of Truth, the former Vice President is nothing to be trifled with. Al Gore appears in the game (just as super cereal as he did in the series itself) as not one, but two boss fights. While he doesn t inadvertently start a war with Imaginationland, he can bore your PCs to death with a presentation on global warming. If that s not enough, he ll summon the Secret Service to gun down what s left of your HP. If that s not enough, he ll hop into a self-constructed Manbearpig suit and physically stand in your way. This appearance by Gore was much more entertaining than his disembodied head on Futurama.

Can t you read the sign? In Resident Evil 4 it says don t shoot the water. It fails to mention the giant swamp zombie creature that eats you off the dock as suddenly as Samuel L. Jackson in Deep Blue Sea if you do shoot the water. At least you get a trophy for it.

Both Far Cry 3 and Far Cry 4 offered your PC a moral choice at the end of the game. While neither resulted in your death, one could argue about the death of your soul. In Far Cry 4 you could just choose to never reach such a troubling moral conundrum by

simply doing nothing early in the game.

When you arrive in Kyrat to return your mother s ashes, your PC is taken captive by the ruling despot Pagan Min. He invites you to his mansion. Everything is peachy keen. Then, you are left alone to escape even though he said he d be back to allow you to continue your mundane mission. What player would believe that waiting is a possibility once escape and adventure present themselves?

Not only is it a possibility, but Pagan Min holds true to his word. If you simply wait at the table for him to come back, you are sent off to spread your mother s ashes and the game ends. A disappointing and lazy ending for anyone with no patience for taking out base after base with a bow and arrow and tiger bait.

Like most Sierra Entertainment titles, the titular Leisure Suit Larry met his demise with humorous captions and unexpected mistakes. In the first iteration of the game, dying from an STD or drowning in the bathroom were just salt in the wound deaths. Who could predict the bathroom was airtight and that STDs carried a death sentence within minutes? Talk about a solid argument for safe sex. The best thing about your PC dying in Leisure Suit Larry was getting a glimpse behind the scenes at the underground Larry factory. It was heartening to know that just like us, Larry was nothing more than a mass produced shell of a man.

Then there was The Secret of Monkey Island. The LucasArts game didn t really offer much in the death department. The mystery game was focused more on the humor and investigative skills of Guybrush. He was really never in any danger. Except if you go for a swim. Throughout the game he had been bragging that he could hold his breath for 10 minutes.

When you have to go underwater to retrieve an item (well, shoved in the water), instead of escaping from the weight you are tied to, simply wait 10 minutes. Guybrush eventually turns purple, then green, then dead.

Years later, this death would be revisited as an in-game joke in Curse of Monkey Island when Guybrush finds the drowned Guybrush. Meta!

  'This Stupid Hole!' Today's Kids React to Atari 2600 Games

Kids who grew up in the '70s and '80s spent a good part of their childhood blasting away aliens, racing cars and fighting giant insects in video games thanks to the Atari 2600 console. But this generation of kids might not be as impressed by the video games of yesteryear.

In the latest "Kids React" video posted Thursday by the Fine Brothers, children 8 to 13 learn all about the original Atari 2600, and play the video games Asteroids and E.T. with interesting results.

The kids struggle with trying to figure out where to put the game
cartridges, then complain about the clunky joysticks, but
surprisingly enjoy playing both Asteroids and E.T. the
Extra-Terrestrial.

"One of the funniest moments in the video was the watching the
kids play E.T.," Benny Fine told CNET. "They kept falling in holes
over and over, to the point one of the kids thought we were lying
to them about being able to actually get out."

The kids in the video even give the vintage games credit for the
popular games available today. "Without this we wouldn't have
Halo," Sydney, age 8, said in the video.

These "Kids React" videos are a good reminder to the older
generation of how far technology has advanced since they were
kids themselves. "It's fascinating both for older age groups to
see how things are viewed from different times to learn where
we've come from and where we are going," Fine told CNET.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Blocking Internet Oversight Transition A 'Gift to Russia

Delaying or blocking a planned transition of oversight of the
Internet's technical management from the U.S. to a global
community of stakeholders would be a "gift to Russia" and other
authoritarian regimes, a senior Obama administration official
said Wednesday.

The comments before a congressional panel came as several
Republican lawmakers are attempting to thwart the changeover, due
to occur on Oct. 1, arguing it would stifle online freedom and
has not been appropriately vetted.

"I urge you: Do not give a gift to Russia and other authoritarian
nations by blocking this transition," Lawrence Strickling,
administrator of the U.S. Commerce Department's National
Telecommunications and Information Administration, told a Senate
subcommittee.

The plan, announced in March 2014, to transfer oversight of the
nonprofit Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or
ICANN, is expected to go forward unless Congress votes to block
the handover.

The California-based corporation operates the database for domain
names such as .com and .net and their corresponding numeric
addresses that allow computers to connect.

The U.S. Commerce Department currently oversees the Internet's management largely because it was invented in the United States. Its contract with ICANN will lapse on October 1.

Senator John Thune, a senior Republican from South Dakota, told reporters Tuesday he expected lawmakers would add language to delay the Internet transition to a bill to fund the government past the end of September.

Strickling's testimony were an attempt to rebut concerns raised by Republican Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, who convened and chaired Wednesday's hearing on the Internet, and other Republicans who have argued in recent weeks that the transition would be a "giveaway" of Internet control to Russia, China, and other governments that censor Internet content.

"When ICANN escapes from government authority, ICANN escapes from ... having to worry about protecting your rights or my rights," Cruz said.

ICANN does not have the ability to censor the Internet, the corporation's CEO Goran Marby said during the hearing.

Tech companies, technical experts, academics, have said the transition is overdue and necessary to keep the Internet open and globally oriented, and that the proposal includes safeguards against any potential abuse by any one country.

Delaying the transition to the multistakeholder global community may also weaken U.S. credibility in future international negotiations at the United Nations and elsewhere about Internet standards and security, thus empowering countries like Russia and China, experts have said.

Trump Website Server Config Snafu Left Interns' CVs Exposed

Misconfiguration of Donald Trump's campaign website left the personal information of interns   and perhaps more   accessible to casual snooping.

Staffers of the real estate mogul-turned-US presidential candidate bungled the settings on their Amazon S3 server , according to MacKeeper security researcher Chris Vickery, the security researcher who discovered the recently resolved flaw.

The practical upshot of the snafu was that anyone who correctly guessed folder and file names would have been able to download sensitive information without getting prompted for a password.

Having confirmed the issue, Vickery notified Team Trump via a contact at Databreaches.net. Proper server permissions were applied soon thereafter. Vickery prioritised notification over exploring the full extent of the problem.

 Ultimately this was an entirely avoidable mistake on the part of Trump s tech staff, Vickery concludes. We ll probably never

know how bad the exposure really was or what other files I could
have found.

During his campaign Trump has made great play over rival Hillary
Clinton s use of an insecure personal email server during her
period as US Secretary of State. The Trump campaign's mistaken
web server configs are embarrassing but not really damaging
politically, unlike the Clinton email server issue.

Independent security experts note that the mistakes made by Team
Trump are all too commonplace across many industries.

 Vulnerabilities like the one affecting the official website of
Donald Trump are all too common, enabling hackers to bypass
authorisation controls to access sensitive files, explained
Robert Page, lead penetration tester at Redscan.

 While in this instance, the breach appears not to have been
particularly serious, intrusions like this can be significantly
more damaging if hackers research site file naming conventions
to conduct wider, more targeted brute force attacks.

                    Congress Could Blow An Opportunity
                    To Fix A Major Email Privacy Issue

Congress could fix this email privacy issue, but might not. fl_(?)_/fl

The 114th Congress time is running out, but there s still time
for it to fix an obsolete email privacy law that almost everybody
agrees is broken. But even though the privacy-reform bill to fix
those problems, H.R. 699, otherwise known as the Email Privacy
Act, won unanimous passage in the House back in April, you can t
rule out Congress failing to finish the job, because that s what
tends to happen on Capitol Hill when tech policy comes up.

The broken law in question is the Electronic Communications
Privacy Act of 1986, and it s aged about as well as that year s
hairstyles. The worst of its provisions is one that allows
law-enforcement investigators to demand email stored online for
more than 180 days with only a subpoena   instead of having to get
a judge to issue a warrant specifying the records to be produced.

Even in 1986, it shouldn t have been a foreign concept that people
would keep mail on a remote computer instead of only on their own
machines. There were such things as dial-up bulletin-board
systems, which allowed users to store and download their messages
on a central server, but not that too many people near Congress
would have been using them.

But the thinking behind ECPA held that anything left to linger on
a server for more than 180 days might as well be abandoned
property, unworthy of the traditional protections accorded to
messages saved on your own computer, or paper letters in your own
home.

The only meaningful dent in that policy came in 2010, when the
U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit held that ECPA s

180-day rule was unconstitutional. Although that ruling was only binding in that circuit s territory Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee major webmail providers began holding investigators to that standard nationwide, insisting on a warrant for stored email.

The crazy thing is, these companies (including Google and Yahoo Finance s publisher Yahoo) didn t think to tell their users about this stronger defense of their privacy until January of 2013. That was several months after ECPA began showing up in news stories about the Gen. David Petraeus sex scandal.

It s now been over three and a half years since the mass-market irrelevance of that part of ECPA has become common knowledge, and the law remains on the books unaltered.

After several years of having attempts to fix ECPA in Congress run aground, we re now closer than ever. The Email Privacy Act passed the House by a vote of 419 to zero in late April.

So Senate passage in the remaining weeks of this session should be a sure thing, right?

Advocates of ECPA reform are not overflowing with confidence.

 Given the fact that the bill has passed out of the House overwhelmingly, and there is strong support in the Senate I think there s certainly a path for ECPA reform, said Michael Petricone, vice president of government affairs of the Consumer Technology Association.

 It s certainly possible that the House s strong support could mean it gets included in some year-end package, said Chris Calabrese, vice president of public policy at the Center for Democracy & Technology. Is that super likely? Probably not, but it s also certainly a possibility.

The alternative is that the bill won t get out of the Judiciary Committee, where it s been stuck since April as some lawmakers have sought to amend it to give the government more investigative powers a common reflex after terrorist attacks.

For instance, after June s mass shooting at a nightclub in Orlando, a measure that would have let the Federal Bureau of Investigation inspect a person s Internet use in detail without a court order barely failed to clear the 60-vote threshold needed to avoid a Senate filibuster.

If the Email Privacy Act gets dragged to the trash, it will at least have good company there.

Congress also looks increasingly likely to do nothing on patent reform, once again preserving the market patent trolls that make nothing and instead buy up patents so they can then shake down random companies with threats of lawsuits for allegedly infringing them.

A comprehensive patent-reform bill has once again stalled, and things don t look much better for a narrower measure that would require patent-infringement lawsuits to be contested where the

involved companies actually do business. That would help keep
trolls from filing suits in the notoriously plaintiff-friendly
Eastern District of Texas.

The last best hope for tech-policy action may come in a bill
that just cleared the House: The Consumer Review Fairness Act
would strike down clauses in contracts between merchants and
customers that allow businesses to punish consumers for saying
mean things about them.

But meanwhile, an older bill that would extend nationwide
consumer protections against lawsuits filed by companies and
businesses to shut down public criticism looks to finish the
year in a Congressional penalty box.

Change does take time. Congress did not vote to limit the
National Security Agency s bulk surveillance of American
citizens until two years after Edward Snowden s disclosures of
such activity.

So tech-policy advocates promise that if they can t make things
happen in 2016, there s always next year. As CDT s Calabrese said
about ECPA reform: If it doesn t happen in this Congress, we re
also teed up for action in the next Congress. Or, presumably,
the one after that.

Apple Japan Unit Ordered To Pay $118M Tax For Underreporting Income

Apple's unit in Japan was ordered to pay 12 billion yen, or $118
million tax by local authorities after they determined it had
underreported income. Apple has since reportedly paid the sum.

From a Reuters report:

The Tokyo Regional Taxation Bureau determined that the unit, which
sends part of its profits earned from fees paid by Japan
subscribers to another Apple unit in Ireland to pay for software
licensing, had not been paying a withholding tax on those
earnings in Japan, according to broadcaster NHK. Apple and other
multinational companies have come under much tax scrutiny from
governments around the world. The European Union has ordered Apple
to pay Ireland 13 billion euros ($14.6 billion) in back taxes
after ruling it had received illegal state aid. Apple and Dublin
plan to appeal the ruling, arguing the tax treatment was in line
with EU law.

                 Right To Be Forgotten? Web Privacy Debate
                       in Italy After Women's Suicide

The suicide of a woman who battled for months to have a video of
her having sex removed from the internet is fuelling debate in
Italy on the "right to be forgotten" online. The 31-year-old,
identified as Tiziana, was found hanged at her aunt's home in
Mugnano, close to Naples in the country's south on Tuesday,
reports Agence France-Presse.

From the report:

Her death came a year after she sent a video of herself having sex to some friends, including her ex-boyfriend, to make him jealous. The video and her name soon found their way to the web and went viral, fuelling mockery of the woman online. The footage has been viewed by almost a million internet users. In a bid to escape the humiliation, Tiziana quit her job, moved to Tuscany and tried to change her name, but her nightmare went on. The words "You're filming? Bravo," spoken by the woman to her lover in the video, have become a derisive joke online, and the phrase has been printed on T-shirts, smartphone cases and other items. After a long court battle, Tiziana recently won a "right to be forgotten" ruling ordering the video to be removed from various sites and search engines, including Facebook.

A Woman Is Suing Her Parents For Posting Embarrassing Childhood Photos To Facebook

Earlier this year, we ran a story which talked about how a parent could be sued by their kids for posting their photos on Facebook. Over the past two years, we have seen several such cases, and now we have another one. From a report on NYMag:

An 18-year-old woman in Carinthia, Austria, is suing her parents over the 500-odd childhood photos they've posted of her on Facebook without her consent. "They knew no shame and no limit and didn't care whether it was a picture of me sitting on the toilet or lying naked in my cot - every stage was photographed and then made public," she told The Local, an English-language Austrian newspaper. She went on, "I'm tired of not being taken seriously by my parents," who, despite her requests, have refused to take the photos down. The woman's father reportedly believes he's in the right to post the pictures because he took them. But her lawyer is adamant that if he can prove the photos violated the woman's right to privacy, her parents could be forced to pay damages and legal fees.

The $300 Kangaroo Notebook Lets You Swap Mini PCs

InFocus, the makers of the miniature $99 Windows 10-running Kangaroo PC, announced the Kangaroo Notebook earlier this week, a laptop that takes the miniature computer idea of the original Kangaroo PC and expands it to laptops.

The Notebook itself with a 11.6-inch screen and relatively weak specs built around an Intel Atom processor strongly brings to mind the netbook aesthetic of years past. But unlike most laptops, which are closed systems, the Kangaroo Notebook is actually based around individual Kangaroo Mini modules that comprise the computer, with each separate module slotting into the Notebook hardware to run the specific system on that Kangaroo Mini.

InFocus imagines that families could share the Kangaroo chassis by swapping out each person s Kangaroo Mini to allow separate work and personal computers to all use the same base hardware. Security aside, it's not entirely clear why you wouldn't just use separate user accounts to accomplish this sort of feature (especially since, unlike the Kangaroo PC, the individual Kangaroo Mini modules can't be used independently of the chassis).

The Kangaroo Notebook is expected to ship in October for $299, which will get you the notebook itself with two swappable modules.

How A Blurry Cow Highlights Weaknesses in Google's Face Recognition

A cow grazing on the banks of the River Cam in Cambridge, England, shows up in Google Street View with its face blurred for privacy.

It's a harmless mistake, and one full of humor, especially given the amount of bovine puns that the Internet's technorati bestowed upon it this week. But the fact that Google's facial-recognition algorithms identified a cow and probably many other non-human faces as well is significant. It's at once a lingering effect of the privacy uproar that Street View faced in Europe a few years ago and a sign that Google's artificial intelligence has a lot of room for improvement.

The search giant has gone to great lengths to promote its ability to detect faces. Consumers are perhaps most aware of the technology thanks to the recently revamped Google Photos, which automatically detects features in your photos grouped into People, Places, and Things. The People search can organize faces from across all your images, and can even detect the same person across several years.

Using similar algorithms, the Things search can identify landmarks, even differentiating between famous landmarks and their identical copies. Did you visit the Statue of Liberty replica in Paris's River Seine? Google knows. Snap a picture of the mini Eiffel Tower at Las Vegas's Paris Hotel? Google will tell you.

Like all machine-learning algorithms, though, Google's must be trained using as many examples as possible. The blurry cow on the River Cam is proof that even with an image database as massive as Street View's to learn from, the algorithms still aren't perfect. To help further their training, Google is making appeals to third-party developers, who can harness the detection technology in their own websites and apps via an API.

As for the blurry cow itself, Google made light of the situation.

"We thought you were pulling the udder one when we herd the moos, but it's clear that our automatic face-blurring technology has been a little overzealous," a spokesperson told the BBC. Of course, we don't begrudge this cow milking its five minutes of fame."

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